

Childrens literature

Literature



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Are children better off now than they were 50 years ago?

Comparing childhood today with childhood 50 years ago, there are many dramatic changes. There are new forms of media such as television and the internet. Family structures and emphasis on values today are nothing like they were 50 years ago. It was odd if a family did not sit at the dinner table together. Today there is so much going on it is odd to sit at the dinner table together.

Even people's life goals and outlook on life are much different. It is no wonder with all the changes that people believe life for a child is much harder today than it was 50 years ago. Children 50 years ago lived a much more sheltered life than the children of today. A young person's family should be the strongest influence in their life. It is more work to raise a child today and parents seldom take responsibility for their child's actions. We need to monitor their friends, their internet use and their phone conversations to keep them on the right track. 50 years ago, moms stayed home to take care of the kids and dads went out to work to provide for their families. Life was much more simple back then, although they did not have all the resources that we have today. Today we rely on daycare settings and babysitters to take care of our children as more and more moms have to work outside of the home. In children's literature books the fairytale of the moms staying home to care for the children and the dads going out to work is portrayed.

Lecture 3 Does children's literature influence a child's perspective on society and their role in it?

The books that are read to children and the books that they read themselves can alter who they become when they become adults. Rather than not

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reading to a child at all it is important to explain to a child that children's literature is fun to read and the books are mostly fairytales. I think children's literature is important because it reflects a time in which it was written and the changes of social values such as gender, race and sexual orientation. Generally, past societies viewed woman as the homemakers, cooking, cleaning and caring for the children, while the men went out o work and were the providers for their families.

This view was past from generation to generation eventually leading to gender role stereotypes. This portrayed women as inferior, unintelligent, emotional and needy whose only role was to cook, clean and care for the kids. Social views toward woman have changed. Though still not equal, the perception of a woman's roles today appears less stereotyped than in the past. Unfortunately gender stereotypes still exist in children's literature today though maybe not as much. Today, the typical stereotypes are that boys are tough and girls re weak.

Children's literature portrays boys being adventurous and playing sports and girls dressing up or playing with dolls. There are plenty of children's books that that girls have to work just as hard as boys and that there education is just as important because the fairytale of women staying home to care for the kids is almost non existent. Racism has been another issue in children's literature. Children's literature reflects a time of prejudice attitudes and racial content. Children's literature early on depicted certain races in unethical ways, maybe not on purpose.

Children's literature has come a long way with teaching children that being different is not always bad. I believe that children should be taught from an early age the importance of acceptance. The world has become so diverse that people need to realize and teach their children that there are all different kinds of people especially due to migration and multi-cultural marriages. Sexual orientation is another big reflection in children's literature books. For the most part, alternative families were greatly forbidden by past societies.

I think this is one topic that is probably still a battle over same-sex marriages and homosexuality. I would think that some if not most people would think these kinds of books would have a negative effect on a child, but again children need to learn that it is not always bad to be different. They need to be taught how to deal with different situations. Children should never be restrained from reading literature that might contain offensive content because it shows them hardship, differences and ignorance that people have had to overcome throughout their lives.

This would just remind them of how lucky and fortunate that they are today. This would show them just how far we progressed in changing life in a positive way. Although racism, stereotyping and prejudices are still present today, every child if properly brought up can contribute to the cause of ending this. Giving children literature that shows them what the past was like can teach them why racial diversity and cultural relativity is so important today. Children of all races and ethnicities can benefit from reading literature of the past and present